

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 09088 180602Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 STRE-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 GSA-01 ACDA-07
ERDA-05 INT-05 AGRE-00 /093 W
----- 053899 /11

R 170531Z DEC 76 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9516
INFO USMISSION BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS UNN
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
IAEA VIENNA 157

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EEC, ENRG, IAEA, PARM, TECH, EAGR, ETRD, AS
SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN URANIUM EXPORT POLICY

REF: EC BRUSSELS 12090

1. POSSIBLE AUSTRALIAN USE OF TYPE OF TACTICS DISCUSSED IN
REFTEL IN ORDER INCREASE AGRICULTURAL SALES TO EEC ARE NOT TO
BE COMPLETELY DISCOUNTED IF IN FUTURE GOA SEES EURO-
PEAN DEMAND FOR AUSTRALIAN URANIUM AS BEING STRONG ENOUGH
TO OCERCOME COMPETITION FROM OTHER SOURCES. NATIONAL COUNTRY
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PARTY (MINORITY MEMBER OF GOVERNING LIBERAL PARTY-LED COALI-
TION) IS FOR OBVIOUS REASONS MOST EAGER INCREASE AGRICUL-
TURAL EXPORTS AND ITS LEADERS ARE CURRENTLY STRATEGICALLY
WELL PLACED TO CARRY OUT SUCH A TACTIC, WITH NCP LEADER,
DOUG ANTHONY HOLDING PORTFOLIOS OF OVERSEAS TRADE AND
NATIONAL RESOURCES AND DEPUTY LEADER, IAN SINCLAIR,

HOLDING PORTFOLIO OF PRIMARY INDUSTRY.

2. NEVERTHELESS WE HAVE NOT RPT NOT TO DATE SEEN ANY EVIDENCE THAT SUCH A TACTIC IS CONTEMPLATED. INDEED GOA POLICY WITH REGARD TO SUCH COMMODITIES AS IRON ORE AND BAUXITE HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE FIRMLY FIXED AGAINST USE OF "RESOURCES BLACKMAIL."

3. ALTHOUGH URANIUM EXPORTS INDEED EXPECTED ASSUME IMPORTANT ROLE IN FUTURE, WE INCLINED DOUBT THAT URANIUM WILL REPLACE COAL, AND PERHAPS EVEN IRON ORE, AS AUSTRALIA'S MAJOR EXPORT EARNER, CERTAINLY NOT BE MID-80'S.

4. SINCLAIR INDEED THREATENED ALLOW AUSTRALIAN-JAPANESE FISHING TREATY TO LAPSE AND NOT TO SIGN NEW TREATY THEN UNDER NEGOTIATION WHEN JAPAN ANNOUNCED REDUCTIONS IN AUSTRALIAN MEAT QUOTAS. AMONG OTHER PROVISIONS, OLD AND NEW TREATIES PERMITTED JAPANESE FISHING VESSELS USE AUSTRALIAN PORTS FOR REFUELING, REFITTING, ETC. GOJ SUBSEQUENTLY PROMISED REVIEW MEAT QUOTAS AFTER DECEMBER ELECTIONS AND AUSTRALIA EXTENDED TREATY UNTIL END JANUARY 1977 AND GAVE INDICATIONS IT WOULD SIGN NEW TREATY, WHICH WILL ACTUALLY CONTAIN PROVISIONS OFFERING REAL BENEFITS TO AUSTRALIAN FISHING INDUSTRY. FISHING TREATY PLOY WAS, HOWEVER, DIFFERENT THAN POSSIBLE USE OF URANIUM IN THAT IT STRICTLY ONE ON ONE SITUATION WITH NO POTENTIAL THIRD COUNTRY COMPETITION TO REDUCE AUSTRALIAN LEVERAGE. IN ADDITION, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE INDICATION THAT SINCLAIR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"SHOOTING FROM THE HIP" AND NOT FOLLOWING A CALCULATED POLICY. THAT HE APPEARS TO HAVE HIT HIS TARGET MAY HAVE BEEN DUE EITHER TO LUCK OR TO FACT THAT TARGET VERY CLOSE AND BIG.

5. EMBASSY WILL OF COURSE BE ALERT TO SIGNS POINTING TO POSSIBLE GOA USE OF LINKAGE OF URANIUM-SUPPLY ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL MARKET ACCESS TO EC. HARGROVE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: URANIUM, EXPORTS, POLICIES, FISHING AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CANBER09088
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760465-0944
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761230/aaaabaak.tel
Line Count: 106
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 EC BRUSSELS 12090
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 MAR 2004 by hartledg>; APPROVED <06 APR 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AUSTRALIAN URANIUM EXPORT POLICY
TAGS: ENRG, PARM, TECH, EAGR, ETRD, AS, EEC, IAEA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006